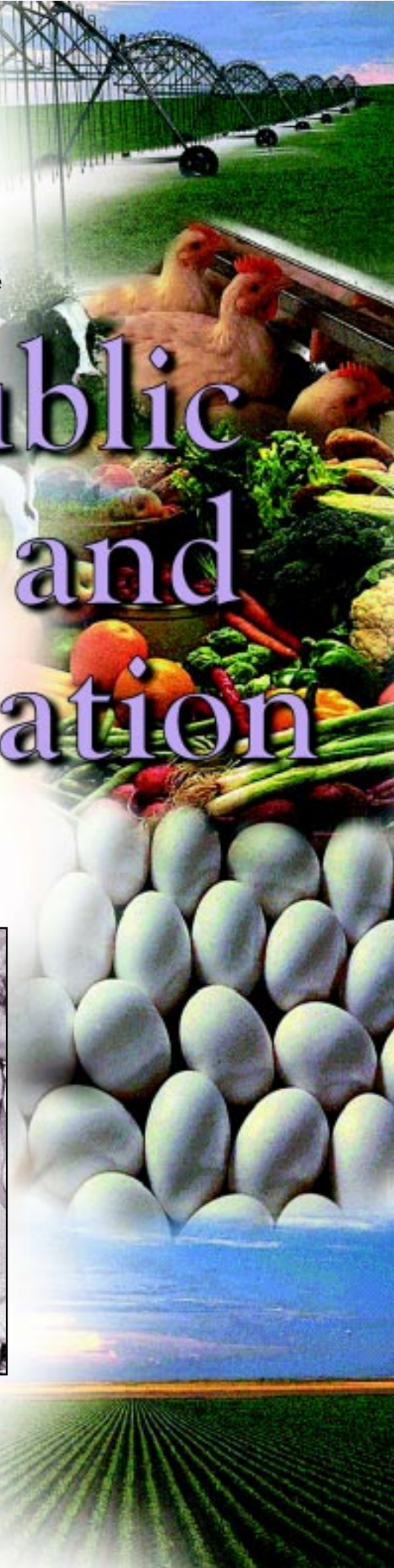




California Department of Food and Agriculture

CDFA Public Outreach and Communication



Public Outreach & Communication

During 1998, the California Department of Food and Agriculture continued to expand efforts to increase public understanding of agriculture by participating in nearly 150 different events that included county fairs, educational forums, community meetings, ethnic festivals and celebrations, farm shows and public service gatherings.

CDFA has entered into several partnerships with other government agencies, schools, and agricultural organizations to help provide citizens with a clear picture of how agriculture can improve individual health and living standards.

The Department enhanced and redesigned its consumer-friendly homepage, www.cdffa.ca.gov by adding and updating vital information about pest prevention, food safety and food nutrition issues. The partnerships have resulted in the addition of valuable links to other homepages to provide quick and easy access to information about these subjects. CDFA produced new flyers, brochures, posters and background reports, distributing those to schools, libraries, travel

agents, airlines, fair and festival attendees and partnering groups.

The new CDFA Consumer Helpline, 1-800-675-2427 was established to provide complete and current information about pest prevention, food safety and food nutrition. It also provides immedi-

ate access to the latest CDFA news releases and announcements. The Consumer Helpline allows CDFA to provide instant response to residents who have questions regarding treatment schedules, answers to questions about treatments and explanations and background information about pest infestations.

A major effort began in 1998 to improve the availability of classroom curricula and school projects emphasizing the broad impact of agriculture on health, environmental and economic issues for all residents of the State of California. CDFA distributed flyers to thousands of teachers in urban areas, inviting them to participate in school-room project competitions. Winning students and teachers will receive cash prizes and have these projects proudly displayed at local events and at the California State Fair.

We hope you will find the information in this section of your resource directory useful and informative. Should you have any questions regarding these and other issues, please contact CDFA's Office of Public Affairs, (916) 654-0462.



AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Educating our youth through agriculture is just one example of how teachers and parents are finding new ways to motivate and inspire students not only to learn about science, math, history, language arts, technology, and environmental stewardship, but also to consider the many career paths available through agriculture.

There are many programs and services in every county designed to bring agriculture into California's classrooms. This includes county fairs, farm bureaus, Agriculture in the Classroom, Future Farmers, 4-H, various marketing boards and commissions, and homepages developed with education in mind.

CDFA is continuing its commitment to keep these programs available to students and teachers alike.



Classroom Agricultural Projects

CDFA and the California State Fair created an awards program to help teachers design specific classroom projects to teach agriculture, food nutrition and proper food safety practices in the home. Classroom teachers throughout Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Clara, and the Bay Area were invited to participate. Resources designed to provide thought provoking lesson plans and projects are made available to the participants. Winners of the awards program will see their entries displayed at County Fairs and at the California State Fair and cash awards will go to winning teachers.

Agriculture in the Classroom

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom has stepped up its communication programs and is working to provide lesson plans and curricula to schools Statewide. The Foundation's mission is to teach the importance of agri-

culture for the benefit of all.

Future Farmers of America

Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs and activities help students develop their potential for premier leadership, personal development and career success. The organization provides hands-on agricultural programs and opportunities. Communication skills and public speaking skills are just a few of the areas in which FFA students exceed. FFA helps students develop individual potential for premier leadership and career success. FFA students who volunteer to help staff the many CDFA sponsored fair booths around the state receive special training and credit support for communication competitions. For more information call (916) 657-4728.

California Fairs

Fairs represent a long standing tradition in California. Not only do fairs showcase community excellence and pride, they also provide an arena in which people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures can

work together, share, compete and learn. Fairs provide a great and entertaining educational service to communities large and small. For more information about California fairs, contact (916) 263-2952.

School Garden Project

The School Garden Program is an effort by the California Department of Education to create a school garden in every school. This program lends opportunities for children to make healthier food choices, participate more successfully in their educational experiences, and develop a deeper appreciation for agriculture and their community. Grants are available to participate in this program. For more information call (916) 322-4792

Homepages

Various educational resources are available on CDFA's homepage, including general agriculture information, commodity fact sheets, links to fairs, educational games and other educational resources. www.cdfa.ca.gov.

*A great resource for agriculture information,
visit CDFA's website at www.cdfa.ca.gov*

NUTRITION EDUCATION



Since 1997, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Health Services have partnered to provide consumers with information about healthy eating habits.

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to promote better eating habits by consumers.

CDFA has been coordinating its outreach efforts by using educational materials from the

California Nutrition Promotion Network for Low Income Consumers, the California "5-a-Day" campaign and California Project LEAN.

CDFA has visited county fairs, ethnic festivals and inner-city schools to distribute information about food nutrition. Nutrition experts agree that healthy eating habits, through the consumption of fruits, vegetables and other food products, can reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease by as much as 30%.

For more information about the outreach program, visit CDFA's website: www.cdfa.ca.gov or call (916) 654-0462

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SAFETY

We all work to Ensure Food Safety

When we discuss food safety issues, we must consider the important role each link of the food chain plays in ensuring a safe food supply. The entire chain includes growers, packers, shippers, food handlers, processors, retailers and consumers. If a link in that chain is broken, it threatens the safety and integrity of our food supply. That's why we must work together to improve how we communicate public health messages to the entire food chain, particularly consumers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 97% of all traceable foodborne disease outbreaks result from improper handling and preparation of food.

In fact, CDC data confirms the most

common practice that contributed to foodborne disease outbreaks was improper holding and cooking temperature, followed by poor personal hygiene of food handlers.

As our society continues to demand more ready to eat and processed foods, consumers are spending less time in their kitchens.

People are forgetting and not even learning basic food safety skills and practices that are essential when handling and preparing food. To help consumers become familiar with proper food handling and preparation practices, there are some safety tips below.

California consumers are lucky to live in a state where food producers and growers are taking every measure possible to protect our food supply from pests and disease. When preparing foods, consumers should remember the important role

they play and do their part to ensure a safe, abundant and healthy food supply.

Food Safety Information:

www.cdfa.ca.gov/foodsafety

Food Safety Hotlines

(800) 675-2427

(800) 266-0200

California Department of Health Services

(916) 657-3064

CDFA Public Affairs

(916) 654-0462

Centers for Disease Control

(800) 311-3435 Public

(770) 639-3286 Media

Food Safety Tips

- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or handling food.
- Wash your hands before and after handling raw meat or poultry. Raw meat and poultry juices should never come in contact with foods to be eaten raw, such as salad items and fruits. Make sure all these items are properly refrigerated and stored.
- Cutting boards, knives, plates and other utensils that come in contact with raw meat should be cleaned thoroughly before being used for another purpose.
- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables under cool running tap water before eating. Always cut away bruised or damaged areas.

PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION EFFORTS

Working to keep Agricultural Pests Out of California

California has a comprehensive pest prevention and exclusion program designed to protect the state's agriculture, environment and citizens from the potentially devastating effects of destructive exotic pests.

A cooperative program involving the U S D A ,

CDFA, and County Agricultural Commissioners helps prevent the entry of illegal produce and other articles that could contain pests that are harmful to agriculture.

The pest prevention program helps sustain the nearly \$27 billion food and agricultural industry in California. It includes the use of agricultural inspectors at our borders and airports, the use of specially trained dogs to "sniff out" potential pests,

and public education efforts in high risk areas of the state.

California has initiated a preventive release program designed to breed foreign fruit fly populations out of existence should they enter the state undetected.

Continued agricultural prosperity both domestically and overseas is anchored in its ability to protect against pests and disease which could threaten production and export markets.



Don't Pack a Pest!

Food, Plants and Animals can carry pests and diseases.



When traveling or mailing packages into California, we ask your cooperation in protecting our state's economy and food supply by observing quarantine laws and regulations.

**California Department of
Food & Agriculture
1-800-675-2427**

www.cdfa.ca.gov



CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY FOODLINK

A California Success Story

Foodlink is a private, non-profit organization that is part of the public-private partnership which Governor Pete Wilson established in 1992 as part of the "Donate, Don't Dump" program.

Located at the former Sacramento Army Depot, Foodlink is a 540,000 square foot food warehousing, repackaging and distribution center that picks-up, sorts and distributes food year-round to needy families in every county in the state throughout the year.

During 1997 alone, Foodlink distributed 44 million pounds of food throughout the state utilizing 50 food banks and agencies that operate more than 1,500 distribution sites.

Foodlink also provides job training for the homeless and public assistance recipients and has developed business partnerships with major California corporations to generate income to support the state-wide distribution efforts.

"Donate, Don't Dump"

The "Donate, Don't Dump" program allows the agricultural and food industries to donate agricultural products through Foodlink.

In March 1995, Governor Wilson signed a proclamation directing state agencies and non-profit agencies to work hand-in-hand to fight hunger in California.

State inspectors work closely with Foodlink to get products to distribution centers throughout the state.

In June 1996, the California Department of Food and Agriculture announced efforts to expand the "Donate, Don't Dump" program into the field by creating cards which agricultural inspectors now give to growers to encourage food donations.

Foodlink Food Rescue Program

Another success story with Foodlink is

"Hunger knows no bounds, neither should our generosity.

We need the continued support of the community year-round to make projects like Foodlink a long-lasting success."

— Governor Pete Wilson

its food rescue program, which each month, rescues more than 25,000 pounds of restaurant and supermarket surplus that would otherwise be dumped. The food is distributed to agencies which serve Sacramento's homeless.

Computerlink Facility at Foodlink

Foodlink has partnered with six public and private agencies to develop Computerlink, a computer repair and electronic technician training class.

This class provides a bridge between high technology employers who need a skilled and trained work force and people who need jobs but lack the required skills.

Computerlink also benefits school children by providing refurbished computers to California schools through the Detwiler Foundation.

State Employees Food Drive

Each year for 25 years, employees representing 166 state government agencies, departments, and offices from throughout the Sacramento region, join together in sponsoring the State Employees Food Drive.

The annual food drive takes place during the December holiday season and provides food to needy families throughout the Sacramento area. During 1995 alone, the Food Drive provided nearly 225,000 pounds of food and \$100,000 in cash donations.

The 1997 and 1998 State Employees Food Drive was chaired by CDFA.



For More Information

Contact Foodlink at:

(800) 283-9000 or (916) 387-9000

www.foodlink.org